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ABSTRACT

Results of a 50-state survey of statewide or systemwide approaches to assessment and outcomes measurement in postsecondary education are presented. Respondents were members of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) organization. The January-February 1987 survey of SHEEO academic and executive officers indicated that two-thirds of states had formal initiatives labeled "assessment." One difference across states was the extent to which they considered assessment and outcomes measurement to be a distinct policy area. Slightly more than half the respondents saw the main role of their state board as one of actively encouraging, promoting, or facilitating institutional intiatives in assessment and outcomes measurement. Brief descriptions by state boards of their assessment efforts are provided. These efforts can be categorized as follows: mandated statewide testing programs; early intervention programs; encouraging institutional action; assessment within existing statewide mechanisms; and statewide monitoring of other outcomes, such as student retention, job placement of college graduates, and economic and community development. The state profiles include the name and title of the contact person. (SW)

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ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT — A VIEW FROM THE STATES:

Highlights of a New ECS Survey and Individual State Profiles

PS-87-1

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ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT — A VIEW FROM THE STATES:

Highlights of a New ECS Survey and Individual State Profiles

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Foreword by Governor John Ashcroft of Missouri.

Contributors: Carol M. Boyer, Peter T. Ewell, Joni E. Finney, and James R. Mingle

Education Commission of the States
1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300
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--commissioned papers
(focused on implementation and other timely assessment concerns; available through the Forum for a small fee)

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This paper is part of an on-going assessment collection maintained by the Forum. We are pleased to make it more widely available through the ERIC system.

For further information about ASSESSMENT FORUM activities, contact Patricia Hutchings, Director, AAHE ASSESSMENT FORUM, One Dupont Circle, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20036

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FOREWORD

Last year, I had the privilege of serving as chairman of the Task Force on College Quality, one of seven task forces established by the National Governors' Association (NGA) under the leadership of Governor Lamar Alexander of Tennessee. The report of our task force was included in the NGA report, Time for Results: The Governor's 1991 Report on Education, which was released late last summer.

My interest in assessment continues unabated. Last December, for example, at a statewide conference on "Assessment and Strengthening Undergraduate Education," I called on the presidents of Missouri's public institutions to develop comprehensive assessment programs for their institutions and to submit plans to my office by the end of 1987. Recognizing the importance of maintaining the diversity of our higher education system, I encouraged each institution to develop an assessment program that reflects its particular institutional mission.

Given my keen interest in improving college quality, as chairman-elect of the Education Commission of the States (ECS) I have identified assessment as one of my three priority issues for 1987-88. With this in mind and to help shape next steps, ECS recently conducted a 50-state survey of statewide or systemwide approaches to assessment and outcomes measurement. Completed in January and early February 1987, the survey was cosponsored by ECS, the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO).

It is with great pleasure that I introduce this two-part ECS publication, Assessment and Outcomes Measurement — A View from the States. Part 1, "Highlights of a New Survey" by ECS project director Carol M. Boyer and her colleagues, is reprinted here from the March 1987 issue of the AAHE Bulletin. Part 2, "Individual State Profiles" by Joni E. Finney and Carol M. Boyer, presents individual profiles based on each state's response to the ECS survey. Both the survey highlights and the individual state profiles should be of interest to governors, state legislators, and other political and education leaders.

John Ashcroft
Governor of Missouri
1986-87 Chairman-elect,
Education Commission
of the States

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT

A VIEW FROM THE STATES

by Carol M. Boyer
Peter T. Ewell
Joni E. Finney
and James R. Mingle

As a matter of state-level concern, assessment is clearly in the wind. Encouraged by organizations such as the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and the National Governors' Association, the states have taken up the call to assess student and institutional performance. But, how strong are the winds blowing? In what directions?

To get answers to these questions, we report here findings from a new, 50-state survey conducted by mail and phone this January and February. The survey was co-sponsored by ECS, the AAHE Assessment Forum, and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO). The SHEEO academic officers were the chief reporters on activity in their states.

Our findings, in brief, are these:

A year or two ago, only a handful of states had formal initiatives labeled "assessment." Now, two-thirds do. The variety of approaches is considerable.

A strong trend among state authorities is to consider the design and conduct of assessment a matter of institutional prerogative—a development many find reassuring.

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One characteristic of American higher education that confuses so many outsiders and pleases insiders is its diversity. The same is true of state roles in higher education. Not only do their governance structures for public higher education differ, so too do their political "cultures." These cultures dramatically affect how the states respond to the issue of assessment.

In our survey, all but a few of the state boards indicated that they were playing important roles in assessment; two-thirds could point to explicit statewide assessment programs planned or already in place. Even among those states without programs labeled "statewide assessment," a majority reported (with approval) on some assessment activity at the campus level.

Different Definitions, Different Roles

It is apparent from our survey, however, that the states are not about to be constrained by narrow definitions. "Yes, we are doing assessment," several said, "but it may not be what you think it is." Survey respondents described statewide programs for assessing the skills of college freshmen, sophomores, seniors, and even high school students thinking about college; they also described new initiatives to strengthen program and institutional reviews by incorporating outcome measures, new statewide retention studies, and new follow-up surveys of college graduates.

Our survey also revealed a basic change in attitude about the role of state boards, one that would not have been found even a few years ago. Governors and legislators have placed the quality of undergraduate education and student learning squarely on the state agenda. The state boards aim to keep it there.

Before discussing the many new programs being developed in the name of assessment, let's examine the different attitudes expressed about the proper state role in this sensitive arena.

One such difference across the states is the extent to which they consider assessment and outcomes measurement to be a distinct policy area. Some states can and do point to explicit and identifiable testing programs; leading the list are states with established programs, including Florida, Georgia, South Dakota, and Tennessee. The group also includes states like Texas with a testing initiative currently on the table, New Jersey with a 10-year history of basic-skills testing and a new outcomes assessment program under development, and Colorado and California with explicit legislative mandates to address the issue.

Other states, however, resist treating assessment separately; they consider it more appropriate to conduct assessment within a broader framework of existing policy mechanisms, such as statewide master planning, mission approval, or program review. Ohio's response is typical of this group, which also includes Illinois, Connecticut, and Rhode Island: "We are not focused on assessment per se, but are dedicated to improving the quality of higher education in Ohio. To get a qualitative improvement, we will naturally get an assessment by-product." By identifying actions such as new admissions standards and studies of retention and student transfer as "assessment initiatives," additional states reveal that they are *de facto* members of this group. Among them are Arkansas, North Carolina, Alaska, Wisconsin, and West Virginia.

Regardless of the extent to which state boards define assessment as a distinct policy area, understanding *how* states define their particular roles in assessment is fundamental. Furthermore, in describing state initiatives nationwide, it is critical to avoid mental "score-keeping" on the issue. Indeed, in many cases, states that reported "no explicit assessment programs" were in fact doing as much about assessment as other states with explicit programs. In terms of particular state roles, the survey revealed three basic levels of involvement.

Roughly one third of the state boards surveyed see their role as minimal—either because their statutory authority is limited or because their current ability to initiate policy is constrained by fiscal conditions or a need to devote attention to other, more pressing matters. In describing their roles, state boards in this category often use terms like "coordinating" or "monitoring" what individual institutions or systems of institutions undertake on their own in the name of assessment. At most, state boards in this category periodically compile data on assessment and outcomes measurement as part of their traditional reporting function to the legislature and the public.

Slightly more than half the respondents see the paramount role of their state board as one of actively encouraging, promoting, or facilitating institutional initiatives in assessment and outcomes measurement. Phrases like "provide leadership," "serve as a catalyst," "raise public awareness or consciousness," "provide incentives," and "develop guidelines" were common here. Among the specific roles noted by respondents in this category were: (1) requiring institutions explicitly to address assessment and related issues by mandating submission of local assessment plans or by including assessment in regular statewide reviews of programs, missions, or master plans; (2) convening statewide conferences or seminars to explore alternative approaches or share information about emerging initiatives; (3) providing direct financial incentives, such as challenge grants or categorical grants, to support pilot or "demonstration" projects in one or more institutions; (4) providing technical assistance in the form of referrals and statewide study groups on particular

approaches to assessment; and (5) taking the lead in developing multi-institutional assessment initiatives in areas of statewide priority or on topics beyond the purview of individual institutions—for example, teacher education or "early assessment" of high school students.

States in this middle category were also highly conscious of their role as "mediator" between the institutions and the legislature. For example, Missouri's role was described as "... encouraging, facilitating, even coercing institutions to address the issue in a timely and appropriate manner, and encouraging others [including the legislature] to give institutions the opportunity to do it right."

A final group of about ten state boards defines their role as actively designing and implementing assessment programs. About half of these are states with testing programs of some kind already in place; the other half anticipate implementation of such programs. In either case, the state role involves both choosing common statewide assessment instruments and setting performance criteria (i.e., cut-off scores) for the instruments used. A few of these state boards assume an additional, independent role in assessing *system*-level outcomes—that is, the documented contribution of the state's entire system of higher education toward the attainment of state goals for undergraduate education. Among such goals are promoting access, economic development, and functional literacy across the state's entire population.

Regardless of their level of advocacy or involvement, state boards legitimize their particular roles in traditional accountability terms. Most feel that their charters require them to insure quality throughout the state's system of higher education; most also feel they have a primary role in providing continuing evidence to both the legislature and the public on various "indicators of effectiveness" for the state's system of higher education.

Finally, most state boards recognize that assessment is ultimately a campus responsibility. Only secondarily and with reluctance do state boards actively intervene in what they see as domains of appropriate institutional responsibility or campus autonomy. Typical of many responses was that of Kansas: "Only if they *don't* do it will there be more push from the Board."

A Mosaic of State Initiatives

Our survey afforded state boards an opportunity to describe in detail what they are doing in the name of assessment. Here are the highlights.

Mandated statewide testing programs. Although this is a popular image of statewide assessment, relatively few *new* initiatives of this kind were reported. Established programs such as Florida's CLASP, Georgia's Regents Examination, and South Dakota's Higher Education Assessment Program continue with no basic changes in their structure or content anticipated. Most of the newer statewide programs, on the other hand, are explicitly avoiding the "rising junior" or "value-added" approaches typified by these early entrants. (Six states recently considered a testing-based "rising junior" option and rejected it.) Instead, they are following a path similar to that of New Jersey in mandating basic skills assessment for entering freshmen. Texas currently is weighing a proposal to test all entering freshmen for basic skills in reading, writing, and computation; similar programs have evolved on a voluntary basis in Wisconsin, California, and several other states. (A related step in some states is to establish minimum admissions standards for public institutions on the basis of exams such as the SAT and ACT.)

About the Authors

Boyer

Carol M. Boyer is senior policy analyst for higher education at the Education Commission of the States.

Ewell

Peter T. Ewell is senior associate at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

Finney

Joni E. Finney is research assistant for higher education at the Education Commission of the States.

Mingle

James R. Mingle is executive director of the State Higher Education Executive Officers.

Testing for teacher education. Teacher education continues to emerge as a distinct area of statewide concern and action. Although survey respondents were not asked specifically about this area, nine states reported testing initiatives in place for teacher education; another three are currently pilot-testing such programs. Most initiatives in this area focus on tests of basic skills as a condition for college admission; several, however, are "rising junior" examinations—students who do not pass are blocked from admission to teacher education programs or limited in their ability to register for specific courses. The majority use commercially available standardized tests, the most prominent being the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) from the Educational Testing Service. Some states use locally designed instruments to test basic skills in reading, writing, and computation. At least one uses the ACT-COMP (an instrument intended for assessment of general education). In all cases, state-mandated testing initiatives in teacher education are a direct response to public concerns about the quality of the elementary and secondary teaching force; most have their origins in legislative action or pressure.

Early intervention programs. Among the most innovative of reported programs in assessment are a handful that seek to identify students' deficiencies in basic skills prior to college admission—indeed, as early as junior high or middle school. Based on the premise that failure in college is due largely to inadequate preparation, these "early assessment" programs attempt to work in partnership with state boards of education and local school districts. With students' deficiencies assessed and addressed early, the hope is that quality will "trickle up" to the college level. Noteworthy examples include Ohio's Early Assessment of High School Students Program and Indiana's pilot College Placement and Assessment Center, both of which have received substantial funding from their respective legislatures. Programs in Michigan and Texas have some similar characteristics.

In Ohio, instruments developed at Ohio State and Youngstown State are administered to high school juniors in the areas of mathematics and writing (using holistic scoring techniques) for early intervention and remediation. Indiana's pilot program reaches back even farther, to students in the 8th or 9th grade. Using mass marketing techniques, assessment results are provided to parents, made available to high school counselors, and maintained in a computerized data bank that tracks student progress up to and into college.

Two other types of state action are representative of a trend toward early intervention. Several state higher education boards are currently working with state departments of education to develop a common statewide college preparatory curriculum for public high schools. And at least five states provide "feedback reports" to individual high schools on the subsequent performance of their graduates in college.

Encouraging institutional action. By far, the majority of state approaches to assessment emphasize the responsibility of individual institutions for developing local assessment plans. Connecticut's response is typical: "The role of the Department is to stimulate activity and change; the institutional role is to devise and carry out the assessment process."

Approximately 15 states have taken this approach: they've asked institutions to develop explicit assessment plans and to report to their state board on these plans (and, in some cases, the results of such assessment as well). Most such programs are just getting underway, but a few are on a tight schedule; institutional plans in Missouri are to be developed this year, and in four other states they are expected by the end of the 1987-88 academic year. In at least one case, the consequences of failure to comply are also clear; the Colorado Commission on Higher Education is authorized by statute to withhold up to two percent of an institution's base appropriation. In all these states, however, individual institutions are being given considerable latitude to develop approaches that reflect distinct institutional missions. As noted earlier, some state boards are helping the development process by supporting statewide conferences on assessment and related issues (over 20 such conferences were reported by survey respondents), by providing technical assistance, and by establishing various incentive grant programs. Other states, with special legislative appropriations, are establishing pilot or "demonstration" projects in one or more institutions. Examples here include Kean College in New Jersey, James Madison University in Virginia, Colorado State University, Ball State University in Indiana, SUNY at Plattsburgh, and Western Washington University.

Assessment within existing statewide mechanisms. A variety of state actions often overlap the previous category by incorporating assessment or outcomes measurement into existing statewide planning, quality control, or accountability mechanisms such as master planning, mission approval, or program review.

In Alabama, Kansas, Rhode Island, and Arizona, for example, institutions are required to report initiatives in assessment and outcomes measurement as part of ongoing quality reporting or institutional planning/budgeting cycles. In Nevada and Colorado, the assessment plans of individual institutions are examined in light of established mission-review powers of the state board. In Illinois, Kentucky, and other states, existing statewide program-review criteria are

being modified to encompass the assessment of outcomes produced by particular programs. Furthermore, Illinois' program review process is being extended to cover general education as well as recognized degree programs.

Statewide monitoring of other outcomes. In addition to the approaches just described, a growing number of states have initiatives planned or in place to monitor other outcomes such as student retention, satisfaction and job placement of college graduates, and economic and community development. Two noteworthy efforts are underway in Maryland and North Carolina.

Maryland monitors retention and completion rates of first-time, full-time freshmen in its two- and four-year public institutions, and conducts follow-up surveys of bachelor's degree recipients and their employers. Follow-up surveys examine students' attendance patterns and residence during college, financial aid, post-graduation educational activities and plans, employment and occupational status, and overall evaluation of campus and program. A survey of employers examines hiring patterns, attractiveness of certain educational backgrounds for entry-level positions, on-the-job performance of certain attributes and skills, overall job performance, and so on.

North Carolina has been monitoring the performance of transfer students throughout its institutions since 1969. The state board also monitors retention and completion rates of various student cohorts, including first-time freshmen and transfer students, and conducts follow-up surveys of college graduates every five years to learn about employment trends and student satisfaction with the college experience.

A Look Ahead

We asked survey respondents about the concerns voiced in their states about assessment. Many of those concerns have been heard before, namely, that assessment is a "technology" that cannot fully reflect the many-faceted products of a college experience; that assessment will be limited to basic skills testing and will not embrace critical thinking and other higher-order abilities associated with undergraduate education; that the process is burdensome and costly and may detract from already scarce instructional funds; that state-mandated assessment programs could become simply another energy-diverting, bureaucratic reporting mechanism; and that results will be used to cut funding or discontinue programs.

In the words of one state academic officer, "Legislators see a test as a concrete solution. They can put their arms around it and feel it, just like a new building. But the problems of improving undergraduate education are far more complex."

If our survey results accurately reflect what the states are doing in the name of assessment, then statewide testing is neither the evil empire its opponents fear nor the panacea its proponents often claim. Even where state boards and legislatures have dictated statewide solutions, implementation procedures have been developed in close consultation with the institutions involved. On the positive side, increased accountability has brought increased state support for centers of excellence and other quality improvements; campus leaders have found leverage for bringing about internal reforms; and new emphasis is being put on remediation and high school preparation for college. On the negative side, states that do have assessment programs admit that they greatly underestimated the costs—especially in staff time—of such programs. More importantly, as one respondent noted, "To assess is not necessarily to improve. We still have a long way to go."

What does the future hold with respect to statewide assessment and outcomes measurement? When asked whether their state's interest in assessment would increase, decrease, or stay the same in the coming year or two, more than three-fourths of those who offered an opinion felt that such interest would increase. More than a third of the states anticipate some further action with respect to basic skills testing of entering freshmen, assessment of general education outcomes, and tests of critical thinking and other higher order skills. More than a fourth expect further developments in areas such as "early assessment" programs designed to assess the readiness of high school students for college work, attitude surveys of entering freshmen, and follow-up studies of college graduates.

In most cases, however, survey respondents indicated that responsibility for designing and carrying out assessment and outcomes measurement should and will rest with the institutions themselves. Only a minority of the survey respondents felt that additional legislative action on assessment is likely in the coming year or two, though all agreed that legislative actions are difficult to predict. In any event, legislative "good behavior" in this regard is dependent upon institutional action. As one respondent put it, "If the institutions don't respond [to state proposed initiatives on general education], we'll come in and measure it."

The challenge for the future, then, will continue to be the good faith with which faculty and institutional leaders respond to the many statewide and local initiatives already in place. ■

More detailed survey findings and individual profiles for all 50 states will appear in a forthcoming ECS publication. For more information, write: Carol M. Boyer, Education Commission of the States, 1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300, Denver, CO 80295.

Individual State Profiles

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT — A VIEW FROM THE STATES

by Joni E. Finney and Carol M. Boyer

The following state profiles are based on responses to the new ECS 50-state survey of statewide or systemwide approaches to assessment and outcomes measurement. The survey was cosponsored by the Education Commission of the States (ECS), the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO).

A 15-page structured questionnaire was mailed in mid-December 1986 to both the academic officers and the executive officers of the SHEEO network; in most cases, the academic officer responded to the survey (or coordinated a group response). Respondents were given the option of responding by phone or in writing. Telephone interviews — ranging in length from less than 15 minutes to almost two hours — were conducted in January and early February 1987. Written responses were obtained in the same time period; follow-up phone calls were made as necessary.

In writing these profiles, our intent was to capture the flavor of each state's response to the survey and to present a faithful representation of that response, including what was not said, within the appropriate state context. Throughout the profiles, higher education coordinating or governing boards are referred to as "state boards."

Alabama

Contact person: William O. Blow
Deputy Executive Director
Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Although Alabama has no statewide or systemwide assessment programs, it is asking higher education institutions for information on assessment activities and encouraging them to formalize their assessment programs. Of particular interest are early assessment programs that focus on high school students, basic skills testing of entering freshmen, tests of college-level skills, general education assessment, and follow-up studies of college graduates.

In addition, the state board hopes to recommend funding for pilot projects within the next year or two.

Alabama characterizes its state role in assessment as one of encouraging institutional action through the budget process. In this sense, it is "placing increasing emphasis on track record as a basis for funding augmentation."

Alaska

Contact person: Ron Phipps
Assistant Director for Administration
Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

Alaska, which defines assessment broadly, is involved in a series of follow-up studies of graduates and other former students. Through surveys, Alaska collects information on four populations: college graduates one year and again five years after leaving the institution, students who drop out after attending a state institution full-time for one year, and students in preparatory and vocational institutions. These data provide information to the state on job satisfaction, job placement and salary.

In addition, Alaska is considering "rising junior" exams in reading, writing and mathematics.

Alaska emphasizes the importance of its state role in collecting and disseminating data and other information.

Arizona

Contact person: Odus V. Elliott
Associate Director, Academic Programs
Arizona State Board of Regents

Assessing the basic skills of teacher education candidates, through the use of the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) developed by the Educational Testing Service, is the primary statewide assessment program in Arizona. The board is sensitive about the effects of the program on minority students and provides remedial assistance to students who do not score well.

The Board of Regents also has directed universities to submit by May 1987 long-range plans for assessing the quality of undergraduate education. The role of the state board in this process is to review, evaluate and monitor the plans, not to standardize them.

In addition, Arizona has developed a test booklet, "Preparing High School Students for Arizona's Universities," that outlines basic skills in English, math, social science and lab science necessary to be successful in college. Sample problems are provided to serve as an early assessment instrument. The test booklet, distributed to all high schools, is strictly voluntary and is similar to those developed by the College Board.

In general, Arizona views its state role in assessment as establishing broad guidelines and monitoring and evaluating progress, thereby placing the primary responsibility for assessment on the institutions.

Arkansas

Contact person: Paul Marion
Director
Arkansas Department of Higher Education

Arkansas has no statewide assessment programs. Considerable effort is, however, under way to implement the recommendations of the Quality Higher Education Study Committee. This committee called for the appointment of several statewide committees to develop programs for assessing students' skills in reading, oral and written communication, and mathematics. It also recommended and specified a core general education curriculum for all students receiving the baccalaureate degree. In addition, the State Board of Education recently approved the study committee's recommendation that all teacher education candidates be required to take the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) and maintain a 2.5 grade-point average in order to be admitted to the program.

Other programs under consideration are basic skills testing of entering freshmen and "rising junior" exams assessing college-level skills.

The State Board of Higher Education and the Department of Higher Education believe they should have a direct and ongoing role in coordinating the assessment of student learning and institutional performance.

California

Contact persons: Murray Haberman
Joan Sallee
Martin Ahumada
Postsecondary Education Specialists
California Postsecondary Education Commission

Extensive programs in assessment are in place or in the pilot phase in California's postsecondary system. These programs are systemwide (University of California - eight campuses, California State University - 19 campuses) rather than statewide. They include tests of English, mathematics and writing to place students in appropriate courses. The CSU system also has a graduate writing assessment requirement that students must meet in order to graduate.

Both systems are involved in diagnostic testing of high school students. California's community colleges, as well as its independent institutions, use a variety of assessment instruments, although no systemwide approach exists.

Several other assessment activities currently under consideration in California (e.g., attitude surveys, "rising junior" exams, tests of critical thinking and general education outcomes) are the result of legislative action. Concurrent Resolution 141 directs the Postsecondary Education Commission to study "talent development, value-added, and performance-based budgeting approaches to measuring and improving the quality of education." Through a task force composed of students, faculty and administrative representatives from a diverse group of California institutions, the Commission was to submit by March 1, 1987, "findings and conclusions and, if appropriate, options for developing, implementing, and measuring talent development or value-added approaches to higher education, and performance-based budgeting incentives for encouraging the adoption of these approaches by public education institutions."

Colorado

Contact person: Charles Manning
Deputy Director
Colorado Commission on Higher Education

In 1985 the Colorado General Assembly passed a "Higher Education Accountability" law (House Bill 1187) declaring that "institutions of higher education be held accountable for demonstrable improvements in student knowledge, capacities, and skills between entrance and graduation." In addition, the bill called for each Colorado institution to state its objectives for undergraduate education. Furthermore, beginning July 1, 1990, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) is authorized to retain up to 2 percent of the appropriation of any institution that has not implemented, or is failing to implement, any part of the accountability program.

In addition to the specific requirements of House Bill 1187, CCHE has responsibility for defining five different tiers of admission standards, ranging from highly selective to open admissions, for public colleges and universities in Colorado. CCHE has developed a single scale for admission cut-off scores for the various tiers of institutions in the state. The single scale takes into account high school grade-point average, class rank and SAT score. Implementation of admission criteria will take place over the next three to five years.

In addition to the accountability program, four institutions are cooperatively participating in a pre- and post-assessment project supported by the Colorado Quality Incentive Program.

CCHE defines its role in assessing student and institutional performance as monitoring systemwide goals, such as access, and determining whether institutions are achieving their missions as defined by role and scope statements.

Connecticut

Contact person: Norma Foreman Glasgow
Commissioner of Higher Education
Connecticut Board of Governors for Higher Education

Connecticut's Board of Governors for Higher Education has developed policies requiring institutions to conduct student assessment for placement and to assess institutional effectiveness. In addition, the State Department of Education requires that all prospective teachers take CONNCEPT (CONNecticut Competency Examination for Prospective Teachers). This exam tests the quantitative, reading and writing abilities of prospective teachers.

The Connecticut assessment program for placement originally was designed to be a statewide testing program, with common instruments to be used at all public institutions. Task forces considering the proposal modified it to be an institutionally designed effort.

In addition, Connecticut will begin in 1989 to monitor other outcome measures: student retention, completion rates, and subject-matter testing for teacher certification.

The Department of Higher Education has served as both leader and catalyst in assessment activities. It views its role as stimulating activity and change. The institutions have primary responsibility for developing and implementing assessment programs.

Delaware

Contact person: John Corrozi
Executive Director
Delaware Postsecondary Education Commission

Delaware has no statewide assessment programs, preferring instead to place assessment in a subset of broader issues, that is, improvement of the undergraduate curriculum. As part of its work, the Postsecondary Education Commission plans to sponsor a spring conference involving state legislators, institutional representatives, and ECS commissioners to discuss this issue further.

The role of the state board, according to John Corrozi, is to select assessment strategies, compile trend data, and determine what should be measured and what instruments and methods are appropriate. He notes, however, that there is a history of institutional autonomy in the state, thus assessment programs exist only at the institutional level.

Florida

Contact persons:

Carolyn Harrington
Policy Analyst
Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission
Thomas H. Fisher
Administrator; Assessment, Testing and Evaluation Section
Florida State Department of Education

Florida's mandated assessment programs include: CLAST — College Level Academic Skills Test, and the College Entry-Level Exam. The purposes of both programs, which were approved by the Florida legislature and are required by statute, are to screen and place entering students and to measure students' mastery of basic college-level skills.

Florida believes the educational system is responding to new requirements by improving student placement, expectations and instruction. In addition, a year-long evaluation is under way to determine the impact of the testing, as well as the appropriateness of the tests and cut-off scores. Some unintended consequences of this program are: an increased attention to English/math, formal and informal sharing of instructional materials among faculty, stronger coordination between high school faculty and college faculty in English and math, statewide conferences and meetings with textbook publishers, and a legislative commitment to a "College Reach-Out Program" aimed at early identification and assistance for at-risk youth.

Florida also provides feedback to high schools regarding the preparedness of their graduates who attend community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities. The state board, in addition, monitors licensure rates for various professions across the state, and encourages colleges and universities to monitor student satisfaction and job placement.

The role of the state board, as defined by Florida, is to advise the legislature on all aspects of higher education. It views its role as significant in establishing minimum standards and in monitoring student and institutional performance against those standards.

Georgia

Contact person: Kathleen Burke
Director of Regents Testing
Georgia State University

Georgia has two state-level assessment programs. The first, the Regents Testing Program, is designed to screen and place individual students in appropriate courses. Remediation is provided for students who do poorly on this exam, which tests reading comprehension and writing ability. All undergraduate students are required to take the exam during their sophomore year; they must pass before graduation. The Board of Regents (a statewide governing board) believes the test has helped institutions identify students who are unable to read and write at the appropriate levels and then provide them with the necessary remediation to pass the exam. As a result of this program, the board has observed greater emphasis in writing across the undergraduate curriculum.

Georgia's second statewide program, the Basic Skills Examination/Assessment for Developmental Studies, is designed to place individual students in courses appropriate to their skill levels and to provide constructive feedback about their academic preparation. Students participating are those scoring lower than 330 on either section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). The Board of Regents establishes minimum scores, and institutions set scores at the minimum level or above. Students scoring below the minimum are required to retake the test. State data show that participating students succeed at a rate comparable to that of their peers.

In addition to these two programs, the state board is urging institutions to assess general education outcomes as part of their accreditation reviews.

Georgia points out that, because all schools are under one board, there is more assessment activity and articulation among institutions. The Board of Regents views its assessment program as a systemwide approach to quality control.

Hawaii

Contact person: Colleen O. Sathre
Director of Planning and Policy
Board of Regents, University of Hawaii

The University of Hawaii in Manoa administers a wide range of foreign-language tests to place individual students. In addition, effective September 1987, all freshmen will be required to take a placement exam in writing. Hawaii's community colleges also administer diagnostic tests to all new students for placement in English and math courses. The university has found, as a result of these tests, that the number of withdrawals and failing grades due to insufficient preparation has been reduced, and that the tests have been useful for placing students in courses appropriate to their levels of competency.

The role of the state board is to focus attention on system effectiveness issues, such as access, choice, personnel needs and state priorities. The state also establishes policies guiding assessment of institutions and of student proficiencies at the department and program levels.

Idaho

Contact person: Rayburn Barton
Chief Academic Officer
Idaho State Board of Education

Public institutions have taken the initiative for assessment in Idaho, particularly in the areas of college-level skills (e.g., writing and communication) and general education outcomes. No statewide assessment programs exist, although basic skills tests of entering freshmen and follow-up studies of college graduates are under consideration.

Illinois

Contact person: Robert A. Wallhaus
Deputy Director, Academic Affairs
Illinois Board of Higher Education

The Board of Higher Education has established policy directions and principles to guide statewide efforts to strengthen and improve the quality of undergraduate education. Faculty, students, administrators and the governing board of each college or university are charged with responsibility for the quality of undergraduate education. According to Robert A. Wallhaus, each institution is to "assure that the needs of all students are identified through institutionally established assessment programs." Although the nature and extent of such programs vary among campuses, the information most frequently incorporated into program reviews includes: reports of student progress, retention and completion rates, placement of graduates, and alumni satisfaction with their undergraduate programs.

In addition, in cooperation with colleges and universities, the board will identify common elements of campus-level assessments that can be used to monitor statewide trends in student performance and learning.

The board's program-review process is the principal mechanism for implementing and monitoring progress toward statewide goals. "Considerable attention has been given to linking program review with the budget and planning decisions," states Wallhaus. "By building student assessment into program reviews and by expanding and enhancing this process in the future," he continues, "it is our expectation that student assessment will become an integral part of the ongoing planning and resource allocation process."

While future outcomes assessment programs will be associated primarily with the program-review process, recommendations from the Committee on the Study of Undergraduate Education, established by the Board of Higher Education in 1985, are being implemented. They include: a statewide program to provide feedback to secondary schools on selected measures (remedial coursework needed, progress in college work, etc.), incorporation of selected student progress and achievement measures into a statewide data collection and reporting system, and incorporation of general education outcomes into program review.

Indiana

Contact person: Clyde Ingle
Commissioner for Higher Education
Indiana Commission for Higher Education

The Indiana College Placement and Assessment Center, the primary statewide assessment program, is a pilot program to assess eighth and ninth graders. Although not directed at college and university students, Clyde Ingle believes the center's innovative approaches and techniques, and its ultimate impact on higher education, make it worth highlighting.

The center was established to access data (collected through an assessment program at the end of the eighth and ninth grades) in order to determine whether students are performing at the appropriate levels in math, reading and writing. Attention also is given to raising the educational aspirations of students in Indiana.

Based on test results and background information provided on written questionnaires, the center provides feedback to individual students and their parents that reflects the student's interest in college, ability to succeed in college, and financial need. Eventually the center will serve as a clearinghouse, collecting and disseminating information on Indiana colleges and universities. It also will provide information on courses and programs offered, financial aid, housing, and advanced-placement credits. The center plans to develop student profiles, based on SAT scores, class rank and other information provided on the questionnaires. It also plans to analyze data to find out who goes to college and why (see article in The Chronicle of Higher Education, 25 February 1987).

In addition to the center, the state is examining issues related to minority enrollment and reducing dependence on graduate teaching assistants for classroom instruction. Other initiatives at the institutional level focus on assessing the overall effectiveness of undergraduate education, monitoring attitudes of entering freshmen and conducting follow-up studies of college graduates.

The Commission for Higher Education views its role in assessment as critical in three areas: reviewing institutional performance on pre-specified systemwide performance objectives, coordinating follow-up on its planning initiatives in the area of minority enrollment, and monitoring overall student preparation and college participation.

Iowa

Contact persons:

R. Wayne Richey
Executive Secretary
Iowa State Board of Regents
Robert J. Barak
Deputy Executive Secretary
and Director of Academic Affairs and Research
Iowa State Board of Regents

No statewide assessment programs exist in Iowa. There is, however, a pilot test under way at Iowa institutions to test teacher education candidates using the National Teachers Examination. Participation is voluntary.

Kansas

Contact person: Martine Hammond
Director of Academic Affairs
Kansas Board of Regents

The assessment of teacher education candidates, which has been done since 1982, is the only statewide assessment program in Kansas. The Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST), developed by the Educational Testing Service, is used to evaluate both math and writing skills. Students must achieve a specific cut-off score and maintain a 2.25 grade-point average to be accepted into teacher education. In addition to teacher-certification requirements specified by the state, the University of Kansas has established a five-year teacher education program. Students may be certified in two levels of a possible three (elementary, middle, secondary) and must meet graduate-school requirements for their fifth year.

Each institution in Kansas recently has submitted new role and scope statements; they also have been asked to consider adopting outcome measures. In addition, Kansas is considering early-assessment programs designed to judge the readiness of high school students for college work.

Kansas defines its role in assessing student and institutional performance as one of raising consciousness, making institutions aware of outside interests, and encouraging institutional action.

Kentucky

Contact person: Gary S. Cox
Acting Executive Director
Kentucky Council on Higher Education

Kentucky has no statewide assessment programs. It has, however, recently identified several issues and initiatives related to assessment in its Strategic Plan for Higher Education. In addition, Kentucky initiated a study of high school students who completed the Kentucky pre-college curriculum with those students who were admitted to public colleges and universities without having completed the pre-college curriculum. Results will be provided to high schools to improve the preparation of students for college work.

Attention also will be given to evaluating both the retention of students from lower division to upper division and the matriculation of students from undergraduate programs to graduate programs.

An effort to incorporate quality issues into program review, along with information used in the past (credit hours generated, service components, etc.), also is under way.

Louisiana

Contact person: John Walden
Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs
Louisiana Board of Regents

The Louisiana Board of Regents has prescribed general education requirements and outcome measures for all college graduates in the state. These requirements will go into effect in the fall of 1987. According to John Walden, if the outcome measures fail to produce the desired results, then "we'll come in and measure it." Meanwhile, institutions are encouraged to develop outcome measures on their own.

In addition, basic skills testing of entering freshmen and assessment of general education outcomes are under consideration.

Maine

Contact person: Robert L. Woodbury
Chancellor
University of Maine System

Assessment programs in Maine, which are developed and implemented at the campus level, include follow-up studies of college graduates and attitude surveys of entering freshmen. There also is interest in developing basic skills tests of entering freshmen.

In addition to campus-level assessment programs, a statewide program tests fourth, eighth and 11th graders to provide early feedback to students on their skills. Individual school districts are free to use test results as they see appropriate.

The state board's role in assessment is to stimulate the campuses and faculty to think about issues and questions of assessment. To help faculty think broadly about assessment, the chancellor's office for the University of Maine sponsored a systemwide conference on undergraduate education and assessment in March 1987.

Maryland

Contact person: Joseph J. Popovich
Director, Research, Planning and Information Systems
Maryland State Board for Higher Education

Maryland reports several types of assessment activities that enable the state board to answer a wide range of questions regarding students and alumni. The board has found that the information collected generates wide interest, particularly among legislators.

The state board views its role in assessment as ensuring that assessment is taking place in the right areas and that measurement is valid, reflecting true outcomes.

Current assessment activities include: follow-up surveys of college graduates one year and five years after graduation; surveys of employers of Maryland graduates; collection of data on retention and completion rates in public institutions; and campus reports on indicators that include statistical profiles of campuses with regard to retention, minorities and accreditation. In addition, Maryland provides feedback to high schools regarding college participation of their graduates as well as retention and completion rates. The state points out that the major purposes of assessment activities are to demonstrate accountability and to provide feedback to the appropriate groups.

In addition to programs already in place, Maryland expects a new program, requiring institutions to establish comprehensive evaluation plans to assess "higher-order skills," to be approved by the state board this spring. The program will specify areas to be assessed, but each campus will select its own methods of assessment.

Massachusetts

Contact person: Peter M. Mitchell
Vice Chancellor for Planning and Program Development
Massachusetts Board of Regents of Higher Education

Massachusetts has no statewide assessment programs. The legislature is, however, studying the condition of teaching, and assessment activities may be developed as a result. In response to concerns that professional programs and course requirements are being increased at the expense of general education, the state also will focus on the issue of general education in the coming year.

In addition to current issues, the state has adopted the use of Carnegie units, specifying high school coursework for those students preparing for college.

The state board views its role in assessing institutional performance in terms of accountability to the public. Specifically, the assessment of student performance is seen as an institutional responsibility rather than a state one, although the state is obligated to monitor and establish minimal standards.

Michigan

Contact person: Glenn Stevens
Executive Director
President's Council of State Colleges and Universities

The primary state-level program is the Michigan Mathematics Early Placement Test; its major purpose is to provide students with early feedback on their performance. The program, initiated in 1986, was introduced by a professional association of college math teachers who were concerned about math remediation in college. The President's Council of State Colleges and Universities, which plays a key role in assessment, approved the program; it receives funding from the state. Students take the test during their junior year in high school. The test is used to guide students in course selection and to strengthen the communication and cooperation of high school and college math teachers in the state. Participation is voluntary, by school district.

Michigan also sponsors the Martin Luther King, Jr./Rosa Parks Program, which is designed to increase the number of minorities in higher education and in specific academic fields. It has three components: college outreach, focusing on grades 7-10 in an effort to raise the educational aspirations of minority students; a visiting minority faculty program with the state colleges and universities; and a minority student recruitment program.

In addition to the state-level programs, two other programs are under consideration by the state legislature. A writing program, with goals similar to the math program, may be developed in the near future. Michigan also recently approved legislation that requires teacher education candidates to take a basic skills test early in their college career and a subject-matter test prior to student teaching. The program, which will be implemented within the next three years, was developed by the State Department of Education in cooperation with the state colleges and universities.

Minnesota

Contact person: Kathleen M. Kies
Deputy Executive Director
Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board

Minnesota has been addressing the question of quality and its assessment through an approach that begins with defining desired outcomes and the standards by which achievement of those outcomes can be measured at various levels. The State Department of Education has developed statements of essential learner outcomes in several subject areas. Building upon this work, the Higher Education Coordinating Board has drawn up a statement regarding college-level skills and the standards by which college-level work can be differentiated from remedial or developmental work. In addition, the board has developed associate degree standards that incorporate some statements of outcomes. A board task force has come up with a set of statements of outcomes for teacher education programs that will serve as a framework for redesigning curriculum. The next step in this approach is to develop standards for baccalaureate degree programs. The statements of outcomes and the standards for measuring them will then be used as a basis for designing or choosing assessment tools and for restructuring curriculum.

The State Board of Education also requires basic skills testing of all teacher education candidates. The Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST), developed by the Educational Testing Service specifically for Minnesota, is administered by each institution at its own preferred time. In addition, the state has a Post-high School Planning Program (PSPP) in which the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) is administered and career plans and interests are surveyed. The board collects these data and provides feedback to the high schools. A proposal to improve and expand the PSPP into a full-scale "early assessment" program is being considered.

A "joint hearing/seminar on the assessment of quality in postsecondary education" was held March 4, 1987, in the Minnesota state capitol. Participants included representatives from the higher education policy and finance committees of both the House and the Senate. Representatives from each of the higher education systems (i.e., the University of Minnesota, the state universities, the private colleges, the community colleges and the area vocational technical institutes) and segments (e.g., proprietary schools), as well as board staff and five national experts or practitioners from out-of-state, also participated in the day-long event.

Mississippi

Contact person: George H. Carter
Associate Executive Director
Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions
of Higher Learning

State-level teacher education assessment is required in Mississippi with the use of the ACT-COMP test. The test, which is required for entry into teacher education in the public colleges and universities, is typically administered at the end of the student's sophomore year in college.

Mississippi reports that they expect assessment issues to increase in importance, with interest being expressed in the issue by both the legislative and executive branches of government. The state board views its role in assessment as providing the initiative, conducting follow-up, and monitoring the results.

Missouri

Contact person: Stephen Dougherty
Deputy Commissioner
Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education

Missouri has just launched a program that includes a longitudinal study of factors related to student performance using the American College Testing (ACT) assessment data base. Its purpose is to identify characteristics related to student performance at specific institutions. Eventually all students who attend Missouri public institutions will participate.

In addition, the state is encouraging and coordinating the development of comprehensive assessment programs tailored to particular institutional missions. To assist in this process, the Coordinating Board for Higher Education sponsored a statewide conference on "Assessment and Strengthening Undergraduate Education" in December 1986; trustees, presidents, and faculty participated. During the conference, Governor John Ashcroft called on the presidents of Missouri's public institutions to develop comprehensive assessment programs for their institutions and to submit plans to his office by the end of 1987. He encouraged each institution to develop an assessment program that reflects its particular institutional mission.

The board views its role in assessment as encouraging discussion about the need for and purposes of assessment, as well as coordinating both the development of institutional assessment strategies and the sharing of information.

Montana

Contact person: Paul C. Dunham
Director of Research and Services
Montana University System

Although Montana has no state-level assessment programs in place, the Board of Regents has initiated a College Preparatory Policy that has implications for state colleges and universities. The policy recommends that high school students who wish to enter a state college or university take three years of mathematics, four years of English, three years of social studies, two years of laboratory science, one year in the visual or performing arts, and two years of a foreign language. The policy will be effective for students graduating from high school in 1988 and later. Although the program is recommended for all high school students interested in attending Montana institutions, only those students completing the recommended course of study will be eligible for Regents High School Honor Scholarships, other state-supported scholarships, fee waivers, or grants-in-aid awarded on the basis of academic achievement.

Nebraska

Contact person: Sue Gordon-Gessner
Executive Director
Nebraska Coordinating Commission
for Postsecondary Education

Although no statewide assessment programs exist, the state is working to facilitate the development of strategic planning for public institutions. In addition, a study of retention recently was initiated to determine the impact of new systemwide admissions standards adopted last year. The university system also is involved in coordinating follow-up studies of alumni.

Nevada

Contact person: Warren H. Fox
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
University of Nevada System

A proposal is being developed that will require each university and community college in the University of Nevada System to review, modify and implement undergraduate assessment plans, based on its particular institutional mission. Consistent with this approach is the philosophy of the system: "to identify common goals and purposes of assessment at each institution; however, to leave to each campus the determination of appropriate assessment procedures, and to assure comparable measures for assessment programs."

New Hampshire

Contact person: James Bussell
Executive Director
New Hampshire Postsecondary Education Commission

The only state-level assessment program is one that requires newly certified teachers to take the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) developed by the Educational Testing Service. Consideration is, however, also being given to using the PPST during the teacher education program itself.

New Jersey

Contact person: Edward Morante
Director, Office of College Outcomes
New Jersey Department of Higher Education

New Jersey has two statewide assessment programs: the Basic Skills Assessment Program and the College Outcomes Evaluation Program (COEP). Both are funded by the state.

The Basic Skills Assessment Program, which was introduced by the Board of Higher Education in 1977, is designed to "help place entering students in appropriate college courses" and to "provide a statewide measure of the basic skills proficiencies" of entering freshmen. The New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test was developed by the New Jersey Basic Skills Council (composed of faculty from all sectors of higher education in the state) and its advisory committees, in cooperation with the College Board and under a contract with the Educational Testing Service. The test is required after students are admitted to college but before they register for courses. All public institutions and some private ones are involved, and student participation is mandatory. Unintended consequences of the program to date include: increased computerization on college campuses to manage the large amounts of data being collected; centralization at the state level of data collected on student retention; and increased communication across disciplines, between high schools and colleges, and within sectors.

COEP is being designed to assess general education outcomes, including critical-thinking and other higher-order skills, and to monitor student retention, satisfaction and job placement of college graduates, and contributions to economic/community development for the state's system of higher education. The program, which was introduced by the Board of Higher Education in 1985, is still under development. Student performance will be assessed for a sample of students across institutions, at the beginning, at the middle and at graduation from college. Still under consideration are whether common statewide assessment instruments will be used and whether there will be performance criteria (i.e., cut-off scores).

In addition to the programs described, New Jersey is collecting information on minority enrollment and retention, with interest in assisting high-risk disadvantaged students. Also, competitive challenge grants from the Governor's Office have been used to establish pilot or demonstration projects such as one on assessment at Kean College; additional demonstration projects are likely to be established in conjunction with COEP.

Interest in assessment in New Jersey is increasing, as evidenced by a recent state conference that drew approximately 300 participants and by plans to sponsor another statewide conference this spring. The state sees its role in assessment as a catalyst for change, a funding source, and an agency for accountability.

New Mexico

Contact person: Rosalie A. Bindel
Associate Executive Director for Academic Affairs
New Mexico Commission on Higher Education

New Mexico expects assessment issues to increase in importance and emerge as a priority during a cycle of program reviews that begins this year. The Commission on Higher Education and the State Board of Education are cosponsoring a project to define competencies and skills required for success in college-level work. The project, which involves high school and college teachers from across disciplines and across the state, is aimed at improving the quality of student learning in both elementary and secondary schools and in postsecondary institutions. The project will result in a series of recommendations to the commission and the State Board of Education. The state recognizes that additional resources will be necessary to implement worthwhile initiatives; competitive grants are under consideration.

New Mexico's primary vehicles for examining assessment-related issues are the Academic Council on Higher Education (for four-year institutions) and the Instructional Council on Higher Education (for two-year institutions), both made up of chief academic officers.

New York

Contact person: Robert Montgomery
New York Board of Regents

The City University of New York (CUNY) system, which includes 10 colleges and seven community colleges, requires all students to take a basic skills admissions test for placement and an advancing or "rising junior" exam. The program has had considerable impact on the development of students' basic skills, state officials believe. One unintended consequence, however, is increased cost due to the amount of remediation required.

In addition to the CUNY program, a state-level program assesses the readiness of high school students for college work.

The state board describes its role in assessment as collegial rather than prescriptive. At the same time, it points out the importance of its "consumer protection" role with regard to program evaluation and accomplishment of institutional goals.

North Carolina

Contact person: Gary Barnes
Associate Vice President for Planning
University of North Carolina, General Administration

North Carolina collects a variety of outcome measures and information at the state level. Three surveys and reports provide useful information to various institutions and to the state. They include: the College Graduate Survey, a follow-up sample survey of University of North Carolina (UNC) students designed to learn about employment trends and satisfaction with their college experience; the Transfer Student Performance Report, intended to provide information to all state institutions regarding the performance of transfer students enrolled in UNC-constituent institutions; and the Retention and Graduation Report, a fall-to-fall report tracking students by various cohorts over a seven-year period and reporting results according to race and sex.

In addition, North Carolina has established minimum undergraduate admission requirements as a result of concern for the academic preparation of undergraduate students. A prescribed high school curriculum for college-bound students includes algebra I and II, geometry, three units of science (one laboratory, one biological, one natural), four units of preparatory English, and two units of social studies. Coursework in foreign language and additional mathematics is encouraged but not required. High school students also are tested (End-of-Course Testing Program) after completing courses in algebra, biology, English and other academic subjects. Test content is based on a standard course of study.

Another statewide program, the Quality Assurance Program established in 1983, is intended to screen and improve the quality of candidates entering teacher education programs. Students are required to take the National Teachers Examination, which tests communication skills and general knowledge, at the end of their sophomore year in college.

North Carolina also monitors SAT scores and course enrollments in high schools around the state, as well as licensing exams in law and nursing.

Along with foundation support, state appropriations are used to support demonstration projects. A math/science network program, focusing on economically disadvantaged junior high and high school students, offers intense academic counseling to encourage them to take college-preparatory courses.

The role of the state board, by legislative charge, is to promote equal opportunity, enhance quality higher education, and encourage the effective use of state resources.

North Dakota

Contact person: Ellen Earle Chaffee
Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs
North Dakota Board of Higher Education

North Dakota has no statewide or systemwide assessment programs. Consideration is, however, being given to "early assessment" programs to assess the readiness of high school students for college work.

According to Ellen Earle Chaffee, "Two concerns dominate the state: universal access to higher education and cutting state spending. The state Board of Higher Education is beginning to take an active interest in quality. That interest might eventually focus on assessment, but other urgent matters make that a long-term possibility." That being the case, assessment and related issues are expected neither to increase nor to decrease in importance in North Dakota in the coming year or two.

Ohio

Contact person: Elaine H. Hairston
Vice Chancellor for Academic and Special Programs
Ohio Board of Regents

Ohio has in place two "early assessment" programs and a "Selective Excellence" program. The primary purposes of the early assessment programs — the Early Mathematics Placement Testing (EMPT) program and the Early English Composition Assessment Program (EECAP) — are to give individual students constructive feedback about their academic preparation or performance, and to improve program and institutional performance. All two- and four-year public institutions, as well as some two-year public and some private institutions, are involved in both programs. Student participation is voluntary. To date, both programs have received "very positive acceptance by schools" and have established "closer linkages between higher education mathematics and English faculty and their high school colleagues," said Elaine H. Hairston. Last year alone, for example, EMPT tested more than 60,000 high school juniors (more than the number of students who took the ACT exam in Ohio); to date, EECAP has retrained some 6,000 high school English teachers. (The mathematics and English composition programs were introduced at Ohio State University and Youngstown State University, respectively; both programs first received state funding in 1983.)

The Ohio Selective Excellence Program was introduced by the Board of Regents in 1985. Its primary purposes are (1) to ensure program and institutional accountability, and (2) to improve program and institutional performance. All two- and four-year public institutions, as well as some private institutions, are involved in this program. Even though Selective Excellence is described and regarded primarily as a system of challenge or incentive grants, it also functions as a statewide assessment program. At a recent Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) workshop in Paris, Chancellor William Coulter had this to say:

> The State of Ohio has instituted a creative new strategy for financing and assessment that is serving to stimulate positive change in the academic community. Through its five-part Selective Excellence Program, the Board of Regents has begun to strengthen selected university programs and nurture those strengths; attract better faculty and students because of the enthusiasm for the creative change that is taking place; leverage additional federal grants and private funding; increase state, national and international visibility of higher education in Ohio; and realize the valuable contributions that higher education can make to the resolution of the problems of the state and the broader society. (Quoted from "Utilization of Performance Indicators for Financing at State Level in the United States: The Ohio Case," by William Coulter and Ann Moore, December 1986.)

Oklahoma

Contact person: Melvin R. Todd
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
Dan S. Hobbs
Senior Vice Chancellor for Planning
and Policy Research
Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

Since 1962, Oklahoma has used the ACT exam to admit and place students in state colleges and universities. The scores are used in conjunction with high school class rank and grade-point average.

In addition, Oklahoma tests all teacher education graduates prior to licensure. The test, developed by the Oklahoma higher education institutions and the State Department of Higher Education, assesses subject-area knowledge in the major field. According to Dan S. Hobbs, the program screens out 10-15% of teacher education graduates who otherwise would have become teachers. A consequence of this program has been to provide more intensive counseling to students entering teacher education who appear to be underprepared. Failure seems to be more common among students taking the test outside of their major field, rather than in their primary field, thereby limiting the range of teaching fields for which students can obtain a license.

In addition to the test of teacher education graduates, the State Regents for Higher Education is developing a test of basic skills for teacher education applicants. This program is expected to be implemented in 1988. Other programs under consideration are a "rising junior" or end-of-sophomore year exam to assess the outcomes of general education, a senior level test for all baccalaureate degree graduates, and a value-added program for the freshman through the junior or senior year.

According to Melvin R. Todd, the board's role is significant in that "the constitution mandates that the coordinating board be responsible for those standards governing admission to, retention in, and graduation from institutions of higher education which are publicly supported and which comprise the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education."

Oregon

Contact person: David Tilton
Planning Coordinator
Oregon Educational Coordinating Commission
Richard Pizzo
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Services
Oregon State System of Higher Education

Assessment activities in Oregon occur both at the state and at the institutional levels. At the state level, the SAT is required of all students interested in attending a state college or university. The test is used primarily for placement. In addition, the University of Oregon and Oregon State University require a minimum score on the SAT Test of Standard Written English. At these two universities, which offer no remedial writing programs, it is used as an admissions requirement. At other public institutions, however, it is used for conditional admission and placement.

Oregon also is involved in several programs at the high school level that prepare students for college work. In 1986, the State System of Higher Education introduced a required program of 14 academic course units for high school students entering public four-year institutions in the state. The program includes courses in math, science, social studies and English. The public schools also offer a math-readiness program for high school juniors, on a voluntary basis, to provide early feedback and intervention. In addition, Oregon provides a systemwide freshmen academic-performance report that tracks all freshmen through their first year and provides high schools with feedback on the performance of their graduates.

All students entering a teacher education program in public institutions must also pass the California Basic Skills Test, prior to their junior year. Other programs under consideration are a computer literacy test and exit requirements that demand one year of competency in a foreign language for students entering the state system in 1989 and two years of competency for students entering in 1991. A foreign-language competency test is being developed for this purpose.

Pennsylvania

Contact person: Donald R. Rentschler
Director, Bureau of Academic Programs
Pennsylvania State Department of Education

The State Department of Education views its assessment role as one of program coordination and sharing of information. Because state higher education institutions are independent -- even in the public sector, each institution assumes a primary role in assessment and related activities.

Rhode Island

Contact person: Cynthia V. L. Ward
Associate Commissioner
Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education

The Board of Governors for Higher Education has adopted a series of procedures that all public institutions in Rhode Island must follow in reporting on efforts to improve quality. For example, information on outcome measures used by each institution, which is responsible for defining the measures most appropriate for its students, must be reported.

Measures of retention and completion, follow-up studies of graduates of Rhode Island public colleges and universities, and student and alumni reports on satisfaction with their college experience are expected to provide useful information on academic quality. Long-range plans include the possible development of criterion-based measures of academic quality. The Office of Higher Education will play a prominent role in coordinating reports to the Board of Governors.

In addition to the plan for developing and reporting outcome measures, a statewide feedback system has been developed to provide high schools with feedback on the performance of their graduates who enroll in public colleges and universities in the state.

South Carolina

Contact person: Frank E. Kinard
Associate Director for Academic Affairs
South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

South Carolina has recently completed a comprehensive study of many aspects of higher education in the state, including questions of measures of student assessment and institutional effectiveness. The commission recognizes the importance of maintaining the quality of academic programs and services. It believes that existing methods of statewide quality assessment, such as program review, are useful and therefore plans to continue them. This responsibility is recognized by all public institutions in the state, each of which has or is developing a quality assurance program that will be incorporated into its annual report to the Commission on Higher Education.

South Dakota

Contact person: Michael Hillman
Director of Planning and Research
South Dakota Board of Regents

South Dakota has two statewide-mandated assessment programs: an "entrance assessment" program and an "exit assessment" program.

The entrance assessment program includes both the ACT exam for all entering freshmen at state institutions and the ACT-COMP exam for a random sample of entering freshmen, who are later re-tested at the end of their sophomore year.

The exit assessment program includes the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), the National Teachers Examination, the Engineering-in-Training examination, and the ACT Student Opinion Survey. Institutions may use these tests or develop their own instruments. All exit examinations are required prior to graduation.

In addition to these statewide-mandated programs, South Dakota is trying to implement a student information system for monitoring the job placement of graduates, including whether students take jobs within or outside the state.

The state board views its assessment role as "providing support for the program from the top down, (because it is) a board mandated program, and providing coordination and a forum for discussion among institutions," said Michael Hillman. "We hope to be evolving to a less-mandated, bottom-up approach," he continued. "We feel that there is a lot we have to learn yet . . . (and) we hope to modify the program as we go along".

Tennessee

Contact person: Robert Appleson
Director, Assessment and Program Review
Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Tennessee Board of Regents campuses test entering freshmen through the state's College Preparatory Institutes program. Its purposes are to screen and place students and to provide feedback to individual students regarding their academic preparation and performance. The program also provides noncredit remedial and developmental instruction to students who lack the necessary skills to be successful in college.

Another statewide program, developed through pilot activities dating back to 1977, is the well-known Performance Funding Program. Designed to encourage institutions to use assessment activities and outcome measures to improve their performance, this program provides additional funds (currently up to 5% over the formula allocation) for institutions that have integrated assessment into various programs and activities on campus. Statewide performance-based funding programs have included the assessment of general education outcomes, comprehensive examinations in the major field, surveys of alumni, and reports of job placement. Instruments for both the comprehensive examinations in the major field and the alumni surveys are selected by the institutions themselves, with approval by the state board. In consultation with the institutions and governing boards, the state board selects the instruments for the assessment of general education outcomes and the reports of job placement.

All graduating students participate in the test of general education outcomes, which is administered annually. Twenty percent of all graduating seniors take the comprehensive examination in their major field each year. In addition, each major field is tested every five years, with all graduating students participating. The alumni survey is administered annually to all baccalaureate graduates from a given year. And finally, job placement information is collected quarterly from all graduates of two-year institutions.

Although it would be impossible to identify the Tennessee assessment program as the sole cause of change at the institutional level, anecdotal evidence supports the notion that changes in general education requirements, advising practices, curriculum and program offerings have been influenced by the Performance Funding Program. Unintended consequences include the increased amount of paperwork as well as staff time and administrative costs.

Other assessment activities in Tennessee are a direct result of the Comprehensive Educational Reform Act of 1984. It establishes legislative benchmarks, known as "Bragg Marks," that set year-by-year targets for institutions. The benchmarks include ACT exam scores of entering freshmen, Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, program completion rates for full-time students, licensure rates in certified fields, and ACT-COMP exam results.

The Higher Education Commission describes its role as working with the governing boards and the institutions to ensure program effectiveness, seeing that adequate funding exists for the Performance Funding Program, and making improvements in the Performance Funding Program to make it more effective.

Texas

Contact persons: William H. Sanford
Assistant Commissioner, Division of Universities and Research
Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System
Kenneth H. Ashworth
Commissioner
Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System

The Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST), developed by the Educational Testing Service, is mandatory for all teacher education majors and is required by statute. The test, an assessment of basic skills, is administered prior to the junior year in college. Passage and failure rates on all required exams, including the certification "exit" exam for teacher education graduates, are published by institution.

A Generation of Failure, a report presented to the Coordinating Board by the State Board's Committee on Testing in July 1986, recommended several strategies to prevent students from passing through Texas colleges and universities without mastering basic skills. The report states that all freshmen should be tested in reading, writing and math at skill levels required to be successful in college. The Committee on Testing also recommended both the establishment of counseling programs, to ensure that students are placed in appropriate courses, and the offering of nondegree credit for remedial work at all public institutions. Reports on remedial program effectiveness will be submitted annually to the coordinating board.

The Committee on Testing also stated that assessment and remediation are the best ways to improve the quality of education for all students. "The level of instruction in regular college classes improves because the quality of the class itself is better and can rise to a greater challenge," it noted.

Utah

Contact person: Cecelia H. Foxley
Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs
Utah State Board of Regents

Institutionally designed assessment programs, with information shared systemwide, is Utah's approach to assessment. All institutions are required to be involved in pre-assessment or early assessment activities. The ACT exam is used at most institutions, along with other exams, to advise and place students, primarily in English and math courses. Some community colleges use ASSET examinations to assess the developmental education needs of students prior to their matriculation into approved programs.

Other types of institutionally designed assessment programs include: "value-added" outcomes assessment at the end of the sophomore and/or senior years; assessment of "cognitive learning" and "skill development"; professional or field-related assessment at graduation; periodic, ongoing assessment of student opinion regarding their undergraduate experience; opinion surveys of students who transfer or otherwise leave the institution, including their reasons for leaving; career and job placement records of graduates; and longitudinal assessment of student perceptions of their experience five years or more after graduation.

Results of institutionally designed assessment activities will be reported to the Commissioner's Office and the Board of Regents, beginning in 1988. In addition, a bill introduced in the 1987 legislative session would require statewide testing of teachers prior to certification. The bill was tabled, however, pending further study of the issue.

Vermont

Contact person: Jeanie W. Crosby
Director of Academic and Personnel Services
and Development
Vermont State Colleges

No state-level assessment programs exist in Vermont.

Virginia

Contact person: Gordon K. Davies
Director
Virginia State Council of Higher Education

In 1985, Virginia's Council of Higher Education completed a study regarding the issue of assessment and the state. The council recommended that each institution develop its own procedures for assessing student learning. The Virginia General Assembly accepted this recommendation in 1986 and directed the council to develop general guidelines for the institutions to follow. The assembly agreed that Virginia's institutions are highly diverse and that applying a uniform, standardized assessment instrument would not be appropriate.

Various assessment programs at the institutional level include writing across the curriculum, tests of critical thinking, assessment of general education outcomes, comprehensive examinations in the major field, and follow-up studies of graduates. These programs are all in use or under development by the 15 senior institutions and the community college system.

James Madison University is the designated pilot institution in Virginia. With support from the general fund and the council's Fund for Excellence, it is developing a set of assessment techniques that can be modified by other institutions as needed. Under development are value-added, comprehensive and standardized examinations for use as appropriate, depending on department size and discipline. In addition, the university has funds to consult with other institutions in the state regarding their assessment programs. Although it is too early to determine the effectiveness of this program, Gordon K. Davies did say that "the faculty of Madison have been stimulated to general curriculum reform as part of the effort."

In addition, the Virginia Center for Innovative Technology and the State Council of Higher Education are monitoring applied research funded through the center and its impact on economic development in the state. The council also is working with the Community College System to develop standards for developmental education, including assessment.

Washington

Contact person: Sandra J. Wall
Policy Associate
Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board

A proposed higher education plan, to be presented by the Coordinating Board to the governor and legislature by December 1, 1987, will likely include a focus on outcomes measurement. Following public hearings, the legislature will approve or recommend changes to the proposed plan. Critical questions addressed by the plan include what student outcomes should be measured and whether evaluation should be designed at the local institutional level or developed on a statewide basis.

According to Sandra J. Wall, the state board views its role as "providing leadership to the institutions regarding the type of outcome measures needed for student and institutional performance-evaluation purposes."

In addition to the higher education plan, the governor has included in his 1988-89 budget request a proposal to fund a pilot "value-added" testing program at Western Washington University. If approved, the program will begin in the fall of 1987. Beyond this, the governor also has proposed support of a unique faculty development program, a component of which involves outcomes assessment, at Evergreen State College.

West Virginia

Contact person: John F. Thralls
Director of Student and Educational Services
West Virginia Board of Regents

West Virginia has two statewide assessment programs. The ACT exam, which is used to screen and place students, is administered to prospective students prior to their admission to state institutions. In addition, in 1985 West Virginia implemented a Teacher Education Assessment Program. The first part of the program, the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) developed by the Educational Testing Service, is usually administered during the student's sophomore year in college. The second part, a content-specific test, is administered prior to graduation — or, in some cases, prior to certification.

In addition to these statewide programs, some institutions are involved in the early assessment of high school students regarding their preparation for specific university programs.

In terms of student performance, West Virginia views its role as defining common instruments to be used at the institutional level, for the purpose of developing comparative data for the state. In terms of institutional performance, West Virginia believes the state role should be broader than the measurement of student outcomes; it should encompass issues of program review and the appropriateness of institutional missions.

Wisconsin

Contact person: Norma Rees
Special Assistant to the President
University of Wisconsin System

A regional testing program to place students in appropriate English and math courses is in place in Wisconsin. Although it is a statewide program, institutional participation is optional. All students applying for admission to an institution participating in the program are required to take the test. In addition, a foreign-language examination, similar to the English and math program, is under consideration. This is especially important to institutions, such as the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, that already have a two-year foreign-language requirement.

In addition, the Board of Regents for the University of Wisconsin system recently completed a study on the system's future that requires it to look into assessing college outcomes and to initiate a comprehensive assessment program for the universities in the system. Proposals for five pilot projects have been developed by five institutions. The proposals vary greatly, from assessment in general education, to teacher education, to engineering. The results will be evaluated and used to inform next steps.

Recognizing the importance of maintaining institutional diversity, the board believes that it would not be useful to develop a uniform approach to assessment that all institutions must follow. Instead, the board views its role as a leader in understanding national trends and related issues. It also tries to identify realistic opportunities that might improve the quality of undergraduate education and the confidence of the governor and legislators in public higher education.

Wyoming

Contact person: Roland Borden
Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of Wyoming

The University of Wyoming, the only public institution in the state, has two state-funded assessment programs. The Mathematics Diagnostic Test is administered to all college-bound students during their senior year in high school. Adults and out-of-state students take the test after admission but before placement in college courses. The test, which was developed by university and community-college math faculty, is mandatory for all entering students; it is used to place students either in regular courses or in noncredit remedial programs.

A second program, the English Proficiency Exam, is used to assess the writing ability of all entering students, and to place and advise them. An unanticipated consequence of this program has been the incorporation of more writing requirements in the high school curriculum. In addition, several faculty members have been recognized as "expert teachers or scholars" in teaching English composition. The university shares the results of both programs with high schools in the state. In addition, two colleges within the university are in the preliminary stages of developing "senior-level outcomes tests" that measure content-specific knowledge. Several community colleges also are involved in the assessment of reading skills.